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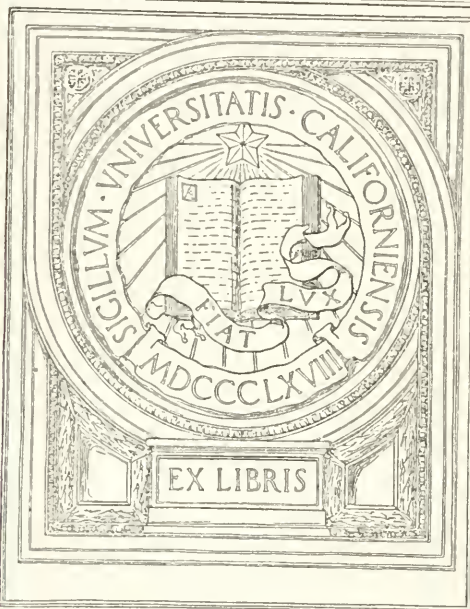
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The Jews in English History.

A LECTURE

BY

ERNEST G. ATKINSON

(of the Public Record Office).

Published by request,
under the auspices of the Jewish Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church of England.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

THE REV. DAVID FOTHERINGHAM, J.P.

(Moderator of Synod).

(SEVEN ILLUSTRATIONS.)

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1912.

Humbly Sheweth

that hath been desired The Almighty Governor and Protector of this Church with our hearts
to draw us in order that we may with security meet privately in our particular houses
to our Devotions, and thus desire it to be directed more by your Highnesses. we trust with
your wisdoms: for the last times which may be such. Whose you be desired. As a
petition that we may therewith meet at our said private Devotions in our Particular
houses without fear of disturbance either to our persons families or Estates, our desire is
being to live Peaceably under your Highnesses Government, and being wear of our all made
and humbly pray your Highnesses to grant it. And that these which may be of our nation
may be charged in such kind out of the Church as we shall be well content with the Protestants
want in words and the place shall be, and we shall be well content with the Protestants
as may be desired by your Highnesses for what long time we shall be well content with the Protestants
To the Almighty God Amen

Henry John Pivael

[illegible]

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Chrysothrix

Mr. de laforet & Co. Boston
to the confidential agent of the U.S.

March 23: 24/5
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Leo Newman
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INTRODUCTION.

I have been favoured with the proof sheets of the following lecture on "The Jews in English History," and I have derived much pleasure as well as profit from their perusal. The author is Mr. E. G. Atkinson, of the Public Record Office, who is well known in Presbyterian circles for his researches amongst original documents for facts elucidating the history of their Church. The production of this lecture is timely. There is at present a spirit of inquiry among the Jews, which their own traditional writings do not satisfy, and in many quarters there is a disposition to listen to the proofs that are given in favour of Jesus Christ being their own Messiah, and consequently their only Lord and Saviour. Among other Missions to the Ancient People our own holds a distinct place, and there is a desire, not only to continue our operations in Whitechapel, but to extend them. What is needed is a thorough awakening among all the members of our Church to the need there is for bringing Jew and Gentile into one fold. The conversion of the world waits for this consummation. Mr. Atkinson's lecture is a valuable contribution towards the end for which our Jewish Mission Committee is now labouring, and I cordially recommend it, not only to the members and friends of our own Church, but to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ and His appearing. The history covers a period of eight centuries, and is full of reliable information, calculated not only to disarm prejudice, but also to excite admiration, and to provoke to love and prayer on behalf of the People to whom God has given many great and precious promises.

DAVID FOTHERINGHAM.

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THE JEWS IN ENGLISH HISTORY.

“Let Israel, rent with woe so keen,
Ere long, without a veil between,
Behold the Face by Moses seen.
Thy will be done.”

“Tell me,” said the Prussian monarch to his chaplain, “tell me in two or three words the strongest argument for the inspiration of the Scriptures.” Promptly came the reply in three words, “The Jews, Sire” And, in great measure, the chaplain was right. When we consider the miraculous origin of the race, and the no less miraculous way in which the Jews have been preserved from the days of Abraham downwards, scattered among all nations, yet mixing with none, oppressed by all, yet surviving still, maintaining, notwithstanding their aloofness from other peoples, their racial purity and their intellectual activity; and when we remember that, as their history has been unrolled before the world, it has been but the fulfilling of those ancient Scriptures, and that both the unrolling and the fulfilling are being carried on before our eyes at the present hour, we cannot but admit the Divine inspiration of those Sacred Records.

But this lecture is not to deal with the question of Jewish history at large. It is to touch on a small but notable section of that subject, viz., the Jews in English History, and it will be based mainly on the Public Records of this realm. Those records range over upwards of eight centuries, from Domesday Book to the Delhi Durbar Proclamation, and for continuity, beauty, and state of preservation, are unequalled by the State Records of any other nation. Spread through these archives are authentic and important facts for the history of the Jews in this country, but only to a thousandth part of these can this brief summary refer. M. Lucien Wolff, the President of the Jewish Historical Society, has lately deplored that only in very recent times has attention been duly given to these treasures for his co-religionists.

When did the Jews first come to our shores? Three hundred and twenty years before the Incarnation a highway had been opened between Britain and Syria by the trade in tin. The voyages of the Phœnician merchants were preparing a way for the coming of the Gospel in the later days. When the zeal of the early disciples is remembered, and their readiness to embrace every opening, we can well believe, and the

thought is pleasant, that many Christian Jews, outcasts among their fellow-countrymen, took service in the legions of Rome, and brought the glad tidings of salvation to England. Some among them may, perchance, have merited the praise bestowed by Our Saviour on the centurion of Capernaum. One remarkable fact presents itself to us. Towards the close of the 17th century, whilst some men were digging at the foundation of a house in London in Mart Lane, a trading centre of the Romans, now called Mark Lane, a strange Roman brick, the keystone to the arch of a granary vault, was turned up. On one side of the brick was a bas-relief representing Samson driving the foxes into a field of corn. Comment is unnecessary. Thus we have the highly-civilized Roman and the equally civilized Jew in England at a time when our savage forefathers were ranging the woods and swamps of our island in blue suits that were not tailor-made.

There is no want of evidence, not only that the Jews were in England in those early days, but that they were numerous and prosperous. In the eighth century, Ecgbert, Archbishop of York (735-766), brother of the king of Northumbria, enjoined, "Let no Christian presume to Judaize, or to be present at Jewish feasts." "To Judaize" means with us to proselytise to Judaism, but its signification then was different. For instance, on 23 November, 1275 (Patent Roll, 4 Edward I.), there is a royal commission to enquire touching Christians of the county of Norfolk, who had been acting like Jews (*judaizantes*) in lending money and other goods to indigent Christians, in taking money after the return thereof, and in detaining pledges. A charter granted by Witlaf, king of the Mercians, to the monastery of Croyland, is dated at London on the feast of St. Augustine, 833. It proves that Jews were owners of considerable landed property here, and even endowed Christian monasteries.¹ In the laws of Edward the Confessor, we have a glimpse of the position in which the Jews were placed by the kings of England for many generations. "Be it known that all Jews, wheresoever they may be in the realm, are of right under the tutelage and protection of the King; nor is it lawful for any of them to subject himself to any wealthy person, without the King's license: for the Jews and all their effects are the King's property: and if anyone withhold their money from them, let the King recover it as his own." They were treated just like treasure trove, viz., a perquisite of the Crown.

1. "Confirmo etiam dicto monasterio omnes terras et tenementa, possessiones, et earum peculia, et omnia alia donaria, quæ predecessores mei, reges Merciorum, et eorum procures, vel alii fideles Christiani, *sive Judæi*, dictis monachis dederunt, vendiderunt, vel invadiaverunt, aut aliquo alio modo in perpetuam possessionem tradiderunt."

William the Conqueror made regulations in almost the same words. In the portion of Domesday Book that relates to Oxfordshire, there is an entry of land held by "Manasses," who is supposed by some to be the first Jew personally referred to in English history. But there are several Jews mentioned in Domesday Book. For instance, there is another Manasses, who lived in Dorsetshire, and there held three virgates of land, "which," it is stated, "William, son of the king, took from the church, without the consent of the bishop and monks." Then there was a Joseph, in Oxfordshire, who had 60 acres of the king's demesne; a Salomon, who had land in Yorkshire, and another Salomon, who had land in Bedfordshire, and is styled "presbyter"; an "Isac," holding in Norfolk, and another "Isac," holding in Suffolk; and, finally, there is a David, having property in Dorsetshire, who is called "David interpres," which seems to point to some function as a court interpreter. In the Exeter Domesday we find mention of an under-tenant in Somersetshire, who is styled "Isaac prepositus canonicorum Sancti Andree," doubtless a proselyte to Christianity. The Conqueror specially invited the Jews from Rouen, in Normandy, to settle in England. During his reign, they were the owners of the principal houses in Oxford, and let them out to students. Their schools were named Lombard Hall, Moses Hall, and Jacob Hall.

The relations brought about between England and the Continent by the Conquest effected a change in the economic system from one of barter, to one in which large amounts of capital were needed, especially for the change in architecture from wood to stone buildings. This capital could come only from Jews, owing to the principle of the Canon law, which prohibited the loan of money on interest by anyone under its ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Thus, for a time, the Canon law gave the Jews a monopoly of capitalist transactions. A considerable revenue was drawn from them by the King, in the way of tallages, fines relating to law proceedings, amercements for misdemeanours, fines for the King's goodwill and protection, for license to trade, and other privileges. Tallages were imposed at pleasure on the whole Jewish community, who were made to answer for one another, and, if they made default on the days fixed for payment, they were heavily fined. As grim old Marshal Blücher, on a later day, stood on the outer gallery of the dome of St. Paul's and, surveying the London spread out before him, exclaimed, "Vot a city vor to sack," so our early kings, surveying the Jews in their English house of bondage, said to themselves and to others, "What a nation to plunder." Madox, the historian of the Exchequer, was right in his statement, that

as the Jews fleeced the subjects of the realm, so the King fleeced the Jews.

William Rufus, who seems to have thought that one religion was as good as another, summoned a council composed of Christian bishops and Jewish rabbis, and swore by St. Luke's face that, if the Jews gained the victory, he would embrace Judaism. Each side claimed the victory, but William considered that the Jews had the best of it. So he proceeded, not to become a Jew, but to snub his clerical subjects. He appears even to have employed Jews as farmers of vacant abbeys and sees.

Under Henry I. the Jews increased considerably in numbers and in influence. Their chief strongholds were London, Lincoln, York, Norwich, King's Lynn, and Stamford. One writer says, "Under our first three sovereigns, they had been to a certain extent let alone; they had been loyal and industrious subjects, and had ministered much to the prosperity of the country of their adoption; they worshipped in their synagogues in peace, bought land and amassed riches; their lines had fallen in pleasant places, and they concluded that the future would be as the past had been." When Hoveden, the chronicler, wrote, there were probably few towns in England where there was not a great, and a more or less wealthy Jewish community. A little earlier, in 1177, Henry II. had granted to the provincial Jewries the right of burying their dead outside the walls of the towns in which they resided, instead of bringing the bodies, as had previously been the law, to the London cemetery in Cripplegate for interment. For a period, the Jews were not compelled to wear any distinctive badge; not till 1181 were they disarmed. Some of their mansions were notable by reason of their dimensions and their massive stone architecture, and were furnished with an oriental magnificence that might have suggested to a crusader the idea of hard blows and rich booty without the trouble of a journey to Palestine.

Towards the close of the reign of Stephen was first raised that outrageous accusation that the Jews were in the habit of crucifying Christian children. This cry, as Dr. Tovey points out in his *Anglia Judaica*, was never raised "but at such times as the King was manifestly in great want of money." The cry long continued through the reign of Henry II. and much later, and if any ordinary Christian had been murdered, or was alleged to have been murdered, by Jews, he speedily attained to the honours of canonization.

In 1188, when Saladin's tithe was imposed to repair the losses in the East, no sense of incongruity deterred Henry II. from compelling the Jews to contribute their share. They assisted him with no less than £60,000, almost the half of what was raised from the country at large.

At the coronation of his successor, Richard I., in London, the Jewish magnates attended in state, being desirous to gain the sovereign's favour. Outside the church, for they were not allowed inside, some jostling against them by the crowd led to an affray, and then to a general tumult, the mob massacring the Jews as they fled to their houses. The infuriated rabble, unable to storm the solidly built mansions, set them on fire. The example thus set was followed by many English cities, notably at York, where 1,000 Jews were besieged in the castle. After a brave resistance, they preferred death by mutual slaughter to surrender. Some who had come out of the castle were massacred, and the insurgents then broke into the cathedral, and burned the bonds, which, according to the custom of the time, their victims had placed for security in the chapter-house. The loss of the bonds was to the Crown irreparable, for it had no duplicates, and, to prevent any such destruction in future, *Archæ*, or registers of bonds, were established by the King in London and the other chief cities where Jews resided. The chief criminals in the York outrage were hanged and quartered, and a heavy fine imposed on the city, for the King did not wish so wealthy a bank to be despoiled by his subjects. This great outbreak of popular fury took place at a time when the Crusading fever was at its height in England. Similarly, the great expulsion of the Jews in 1290, to which reference will be made later on, took place under Edward I., a monarch who, after Richard I., was most imbued with the Crusading spirit. The Jews, too, desired to see their sacred land, and in the year 1211, 300 rabbis from England and France started for a pilgrimage to Palestine.

Richard I., in order to ascertain the financial position of the Jews in England, established what was known as the "Exchequer of the Jews," over which Justices presided, who were sometimes Christians and sometimes Jews. They protected not only the Jewish revenues under their care, but also decided as judges in civil actions where a Jew was one of the litigants. All effects belonging to Jews were to be registered; the concealment of any particular was to be forfeiture of body and whole estate. All Jewish contracts were to be made in the presence of two assigned lawyers, who were to be Jews, two who were to be Christians, and two public notaries. These contracts, or *starra* (*Shetaroth*), written chiefly in Hebrew, were sometimes in the nature of I.O.U's, and sometimes of acquittances or releases. Six documents of this nature are referred to in the Pipe Roll of 3 John, as having been produced by Robert, Earl of Leicester, in part discharge of a debt owing by him to Aaron, the Jew of Lincoln, with which he was charged on the lands and chattels of the said Jew being seized into the King's hands. When-

ever such seizure took place, whether through forfeiture or otherwise, the contracts relating to any debts due to a Jew were transferred to the Exchequer for the King's benefit. There are only thirteen starra in the Public Record Office (the firing in York Cathedral, mentioned above, accounted for many), but a much larger collection is preserved in the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster. When entered upon transcript rolls, these starra were deposited in chests, under three keys, in certain places, the most important of which was the Exchequer at Westminster. No starr was of any legal force unless found in one of these repositories. Dr. Tovey says that "the Jews were allowed to take two pence a week interest on the loan of a pound." (*i.e.*, about $43\frac{1}{3}$ per cent.): and we have on the Close Rolls of Henry III. (32 Hen. III. m. 9.) a petition from impecunious undergraduates of Oxford praying that they should not be obliged to pay more. The petition was granted.

King John, of evil memory, preserved the Jews like game for destruction. He knew their wealth, and also their unpopularity, and, for his own fell purposes, paid court to them. From the chests in the Star Chamber he knew exactly what land and gold they had. He extended to the entire Jewish community in England a charter of privileges that Henry I. had granted to a particular magnate, his family, and dependents. Among these privileges was that of travelling and settling where they would; also, exemption from tolls and customs, being tried by their peers, sworn on the Pentateuch, &c. By this charter, if a Jew were impleaded by a Christian who failed to produce testimony, he might purge himself by his bare oath on the Pentateuch; but, in a similar case, a Christian, as the law then stood, had to produce the testimony of eleven others in addition to his own. The result was to give the Jew a great advantage over the Christian, the object of the Crown evidently being, says Mr. J. M. Rigg, to use the Jews "as a reservoir, equally open to receive and close to retain the surplus wealth of the surrounding population." Thus the Crown would always have a fund to draw upon in the hour of need. King John further granted on 31st July, 1199, to "Jacob, the Jew of London, presbyter, for his life, the presbytership (*presbiteratum*) of all the Jews of England," and gave him a safe conduct throughout his dominions.

After a few years the King's prey was ready for the spoiler. In 1210 66,000 marks (£880,000 of our present money) were levied from the Jewish community. Imprisonment and torture were their constant lot. Their houses were seized or pulled down to help in building houses for others. There was scarcely an important building in the country which had not been raised by Jewish capital; and that, not only, as has often

been supposed, in the large towns. Investigation has proved that the Jews were widely dispersed throughout all the settled parts of England, and a map has been constructed in proof. Court favourites, deep in debt to the Jews, were freed from their obligations, for did not the money belong by law to the King? On the occasion of a royal marriage or funeral the Jews had to contribute. Even their cemeteries were violated. When Ludgate was being rebuilt a large stone fell out of the excavated wall on which was this inscription in Hebrew, "The tombstone of Rabbi Moses, the son of the Rabbi Isaac, the wise and learned." In 1250 (Patent Roll, 34 Henry III. m. 3), there is a notification to the Justices for the keeping of the Jews, that the King has granted to the Jews of London, that their Masters of the Law in the city may publish sentence of excommunication against all Jews who promised a subsidy for the maintenance of their cemetery in London and have not paid it, on condition, however, that the King, and not one of the Jews, should receive the "amends" paid on such excommunication.

In the reign of this monarch, Henry III., Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, carried on the work of pitiless persecution. No Jew could leave England without special permission. No Christian was allowed to buy anything of the Jews, or to sell them any of the necessities of life, or to hold any communication with them, as, by the laws of the Church, all Jews were excommunicated. No new schools for the education of Jewish youth were to be erected. Every Jew was to be answerable to the rector of his parish for parochial dues chargeable on his house.

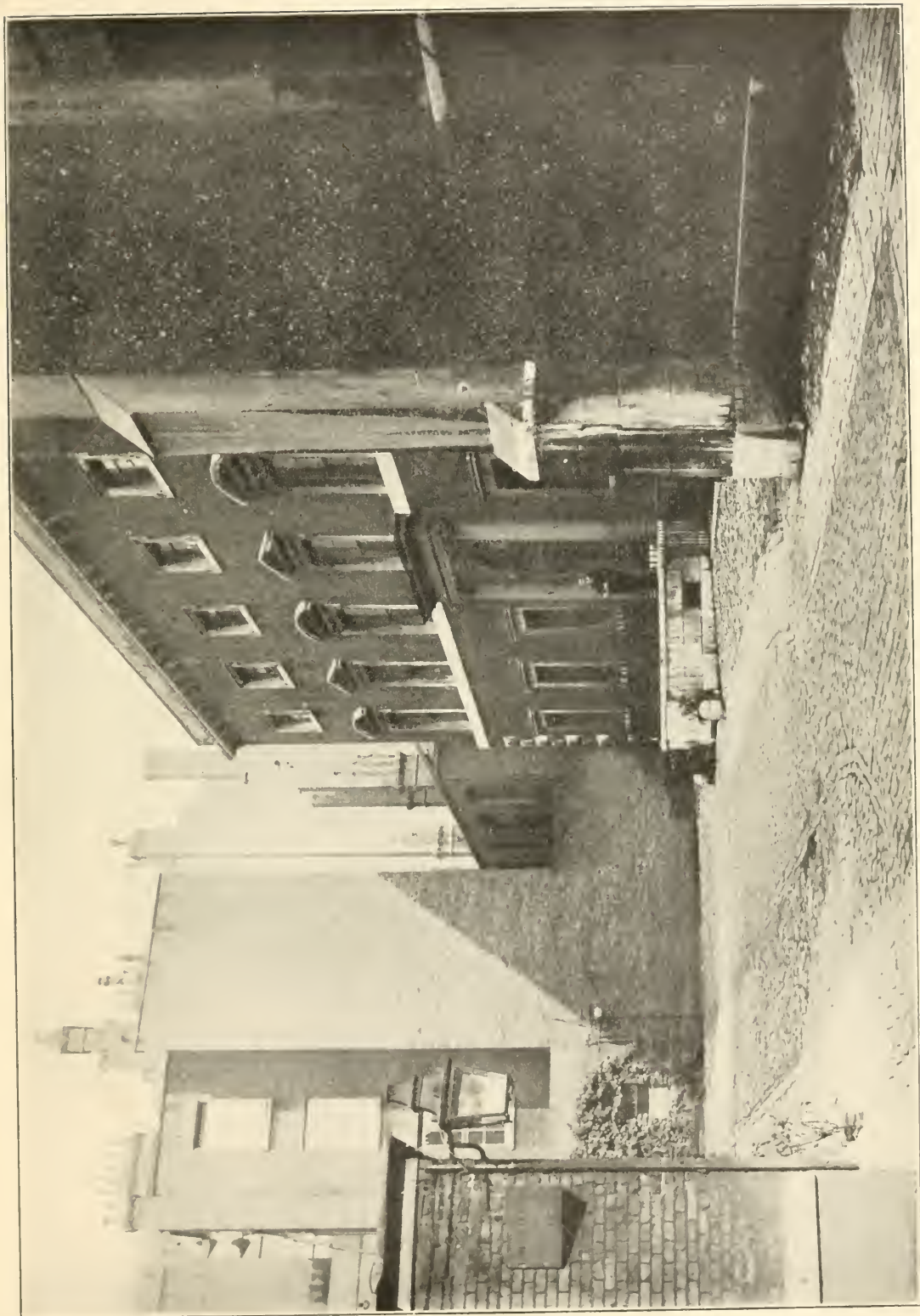
Occasionally there was an appearance of consideration, but the money levied by the authorities had to be brought in. In the Patent Roll of 33 Henry III., we have, in 1249, the appointment of Aaron of York, Ellis le Evesk, Aaron son of Abraham, and Abraham de Berkhamsted, Jews, to assess the tallage of 500 marks and 26 marks of gold, for Michaelmas term, 33 Henry III., upon the several Jews of the realm; and they are to take with them two middle-class Jews, and two poor Jews, to assess the said tallage, so that the rich be not spared, and the poor not too much grieved.

Aaron, the Jew of York, had the *presbiteratum* of all the Jews of England. His successor in the office was the above-named Ellis, or Elias, indifferently called prestre, evesk, and episcopus. The grant of the position to Elias is on the Patent Roll, 27 Henry III., m. 2, and is dated on October 17, 1243. He is to have the position for life, "with all liberties and free customs belonging to it, and, if any offend in this respect, they [the King's Justices,

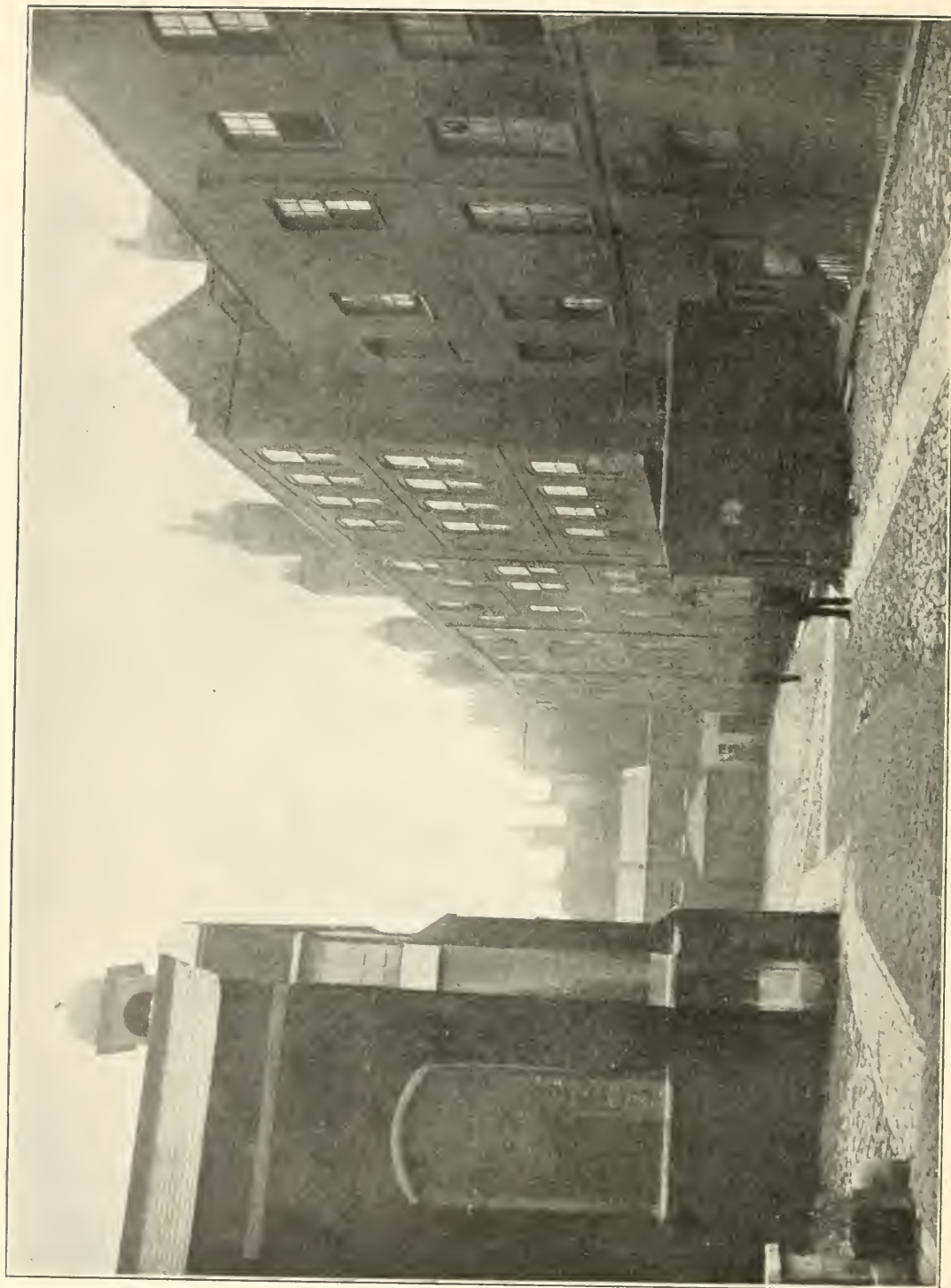
Sheriffs, &c.] are without delay to cause it to be amended, saving the "amends" to the King. The charter is witnessed by the Archbishop of York, the Bishops of Chichester and Carlisle, and others. In the year 1250, we have a grant (Patent Roll, 34 Henry III., m. 3) to this same Elias, for his long and faithful service, "and for ten marks of gold," that, from Michaelmas next, for the four years following, he shall be tallaged yearly at £100, and he is to have respite meanwhile of his old debt to the King, and in case the tallage of the Jews diminish, his proportion shall diminish likewise. But Elias got into trouble, a few years afterwards, through some fraud practised by him, and so we learn (Patent Roll, 41 Henry III.), under date July 20, 1257, that whereas he, for the trespass which he committed, "as well against the King, as against the King of Almain, his brother, has been dismissed (*abjudicatus*) from the priesthood (*a sacerdotio*) of the commonalty of the Jews of England, before the Justices for the keeping of the Jews, who were appointed to prove the trespass, by their judgment at the Exchequer, and has been deposed from that office, and from all other offices and bailiwicks which he had from the King before; the King, by counsel of the said Justices, has granted to the said commonalty of the Jews of England, for a fine of three marks of gold, made to the King for the said commonalty, that the said Elias shall never again have and recover the said priesthood, that none of the commonalty shall henceforth be priest, except by common election of the said commonalty, and that, after the death of any such elected priest, they shall have full power to elect whom they will, and to present him to the King, that he may obtain the King's assent and favour."

Among the regulations issued against the oppressed race was this one, "To prevent the mixture of Jewish men and women with Christians of each sex, we charge, by authority of the General Council [*i.e.*, the Lateran Council of 1215], that the Jews of both sexes wear a linen cloth, two inches broad and four fingers long, of a different colour from their own clothes, on their upper garment, before their breast, and that they be compelled to do this by ecclesiastical censure; and let them not presume to enter into any church." The badge was of divers colours in various countries. In England it was of saffron taffety. The enactment, though neglected after 1656, was actually not repealed until 1846.

It is recorded in the Patent Roll for 30 Henry III., that in 1246 the King imposed a fine on Moses, son of Hamo, a Jew of Hereford, for succession to the goods and chattels of his father. The fine was £3,000



THE ROLLS HOUSE AND YARD, 1890.
(Where the new wing of the Public Record Office now stands.)



THE ROLLS CHAPEL AND YARD, 1890.
(Where the new wing of the Public Record Office now stands.)

(at least £60,000 of our present money), and the King assigned it all to the works of the church at Westminster. The archdeacon of Westminster and others were appointed to receive the money by instalments. Again, on April 22 of the same year, the King granted to the works of the same church a sum of £2,591, which he had borrowed from the wife of a Jew, David de Oxonia. These are but two instances, but enough to make us remember, the next time we look at the Abbey, that it was built partly with Jewish money.

Attention must now be called to the *Domus Conversorum Judæorum*, or House of Converted Jews, founded by Henry III., in 1232, "out of" (to quote the words of the foundation charter) "our royal grace to the Jews, and for the support of such of them as embrace the Christian religion, and are destitute of livelihood." Matthew Paris, the chronicler, informs us that this king founded a similar institution at Oxford, and the Records tell us somewhat of its history. Our Jewish Mission premises of the future, be it remembered, must have such a *Domus Conversorum*. The Chapel attached to the *Domus* existed, not without numerous alterations at divers periods, until its demolition in 1896, to make way for the extension of the Public Record Office. The Chapel was possibly injured in the Great Fire of London, for a letter of September 9, 1666, states: "Your friends in Chancery Lane are safe, but the fire was near them, behind the Rowles, where it gott a great cheek, so that we hope it is stopt." The ancient Hospital of the Converts, eventually represented by the Rolls House, had also its vicissitudes. Strype, in his continuation of Stow, calls the Rolls House "large, but very old and decayed," and it was demolished a few years after. In 1717 its rebuilding was commenced. The designs were entrusted by the Treasury to one Colin Campbell, who was appointed to pull down the old house, and the account for his work, which was completed in 1724, is preserved in the Audit Office Declared Accounts at the Public Record Office. Many interesting details as to the history of the *Domus Conversorum* and its Chapel have been published by Sir H. Maxwell Lyte, K.C.B., and Mr. W. J. Hardy.

Many of the early Wardens of the House were also Keepers of the Rolls in Chancery, and Edward III. found it convenient definitely to unite the two offices in one person. This was done in 1377, the last year of his reign, and the arrangement continued until the reign of Charles II., when the House was no longer used for its ancient purpose. But it remained in later times, and up till 1837, the residence of the Masters of the Rolls, who presided over the Rolls Court, held in the lower part of the building.

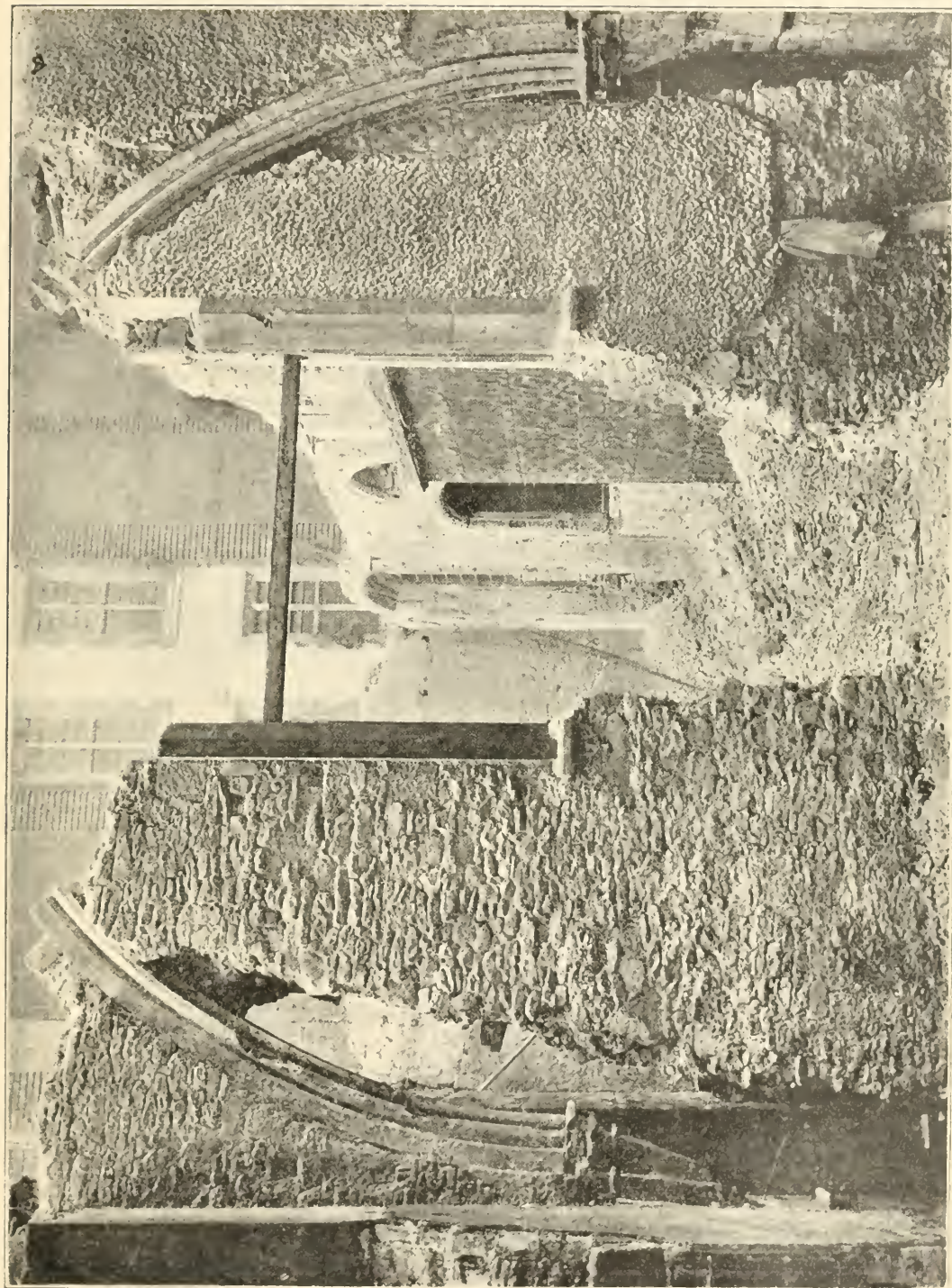
An amusing instance of the passion for old forms in letters patent is to be seen in those appointing Sir John (afterwards Lord) Romilly in 1851 to "the custody of the House, or Hospital, of Converts, for the habitation of the Keeper, or Master, of the Rolls, Books, Writs, and Records" of the High Court of Chancery. The mistake was not repeated in the case of his immediate successor, Sir George Jessel, an illustrious Jew.

Under the pews of the Chapel were formerly stored many Chancery Records, and at its doorway solicitors and others met for the payment of mortgages. In 1641 it is mentioned as the place at which Charles I. was to repay a loan of £2,000 made to him by Sir John Lambe.

One incident regarding the Chapel may be noticed here. Under the Presbyterian régime, in the 17th century, it was resolved by the Lords and Commons in Parliament (December, 1645), "That the Chapel of the Rolls, the two Serjeants' Inns, and the four Inns of Court, shall be a province of themselves": "That the Presbytery of the Chapel of the Rolls, the two Serjeants' Inns, and the four Inns of Court, shall be divided into two *classes*"; and, "That Lincoln's Inn, Gray's Inn, and Serjeants' Inn, and Chancery Lane and the Rolls, shall be one *classis*." Thus the old *Domus* and its Chapel once formed part of an English Presbytery, and this action of our spiritual ancestors links us their descendants with the one kindly purpose of English mediæval times towards the Jews, and should arouse in us an earnest desire to seek the welfare of Israel.

It is interesting to note, in connection with this point of Jewish converts, that on June 18, 1240 (Close Roll, 24 Henry III. m. 10*d.*), the King wrote to the sheriff of Huntingdon, that he had heard that Master W. de Arundel, archdeacon of Huntingdon, had composed a certain pamphlet on the conversion of the Jews, for the translation (*interpretationem*) of which it was necessary to invoke the counsel and aid of some good Jewish interpreter. The King, therefore, commands the sheriff to allow any Jew whom the archdeacon might wish to come to the county and stay with the archdeacon for the above purpose.

But, to return to the dark picture again. So bitter was life made for the Jews that, towards the close of the reign of Henry III., they resolved to leave England. Their application for leave to do so was refused, and some of the richest of them were summoned to appear before the Council, and were threatened with severe punishment if they did not immediately surrender a great portion of their wealth to the King and his advisers. On the Patent Roll, 39 Henry III., we read that in 1255 the King received a loan of 5,000 marks from his brother Richard, Earl



THIRTEENTH CENTURY CHANCEL ARCH, DISCOVERED DURING THE DEMOLITION OF THE ROLLS CHAPEL, 1896.

of Cornwall, and, for payment thereof, assigned to the said Earl "his Jews of England" (the very words); the dates of the instalments to be paid by them are given. Henry III., the day before, had got another loan of 5,000 marks from the Earl, and had pawned to him, as a security, a large number of the royal jewels. The unfortunate Jews were doomed to pay both loans. If they failed in any instalment they were to pay the Earl 500 marks for their trespass every term, and he was given power over their bodies and chattels.

Among the large number of documents in the Public Record Office relating to the Jews may be mentioned the Great Roll of the Exchequer for 31 Henry I. (1130-31), containing an entry of sums of money paid to the King by Rabbi Gotsee and other Jews of London, and a notice of a fine of £2,000 exacted from them for killing a sick man. In the Miscellanea of the Exchequer (King's Remembrancer),⁵²⁶ there is an account of money received from Jews in various counties and places throughout England, in the fifth year of Richard I. (1193-4). The account contains a list of over 300 names of Jews.

On the Forest Roll of Essex for 5 Edward I. (1277) is the earliest dated sketch of a mediæval Jew. On his dress appears the badge, representing the two tables of the law, which every Jew was obliged to wear. In the Exchequer of Receipt there is a series of thirty-eight "Jews' Rolls," ranging from the reign of John to 23 Edward I., and containing yearly accounts of the receipts from the tallages and fines imposed on the Jews. Again, in the Exchequer of Pleas there is another series of fifty-three rolls, ranging from 3 Henry III. to 14 Edward I., containing pleadings in cases between Jews, and between Christians and Jews, before the judges known as "Justices of the Jews." This latter series belongs to the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I. Then we have the rolls in which the Wardens of the House of Converts give detailed accounts of their receipts and expenses. These Rolls extend for nearly 300 years, from the fifth year of Edward III. (1332) to the sixth year of James I. (1609). Some of the income of the House arose from the rents of property with which it had been endowed; and it is interesting to notice that on several occasions converts were employed for collecting these rents, the change of faith not having eliminated the innate capacity of the Jews for getting in outstanding debts. As regards this House of Converted Jews, the whirligig of time brought its revenges. For, in 1873, Sir George Jessel was appointed Master of the Rolls; and thus a very eminent Jew was seen in the high places of justice, administering the law with singular ability

on the site of the old building which had received so many of his co-religionists on their acceptance of the Christian faith.

But to return to the reign of Edward I. That monarch was strongly anti-Semitic, and he found a state of matters in his realm which enabled him to gratify his hatred to the Jews. These could not assimilate themselves with the people of feudal England, for citizenship involved spiritual communion. They could not enter guilds, which were founded on a religious basis. They were unable to do homage or to take an oath of fealty, and it was unlawful for Christians to do homage or fealty to them. It was only as gagees that the Jews could be seized of lands at all, and those lands tenable by rent in money or kind. The monks said that the possession of land by the Jews would put into their hands spiritual benefices. Even Magna Carta, which had protected foreign traders from personal violence and pecuniary exactions, suspended the accruing of interest during the minority of an heir who owed a Jew money. In the first Parliament of Edward I. (1275) an Act was passed against usury, extending the Canon Law on that point to the Jews, who had been the usurers and unofficial tax-gatherers of the realm. When this enactment took place the Jews had no *locus standi* in the country. Between 1275 and 1290 measures appear to have been taken to re-arrange the national finances, and for Jews were substituted Italians, such as the Bardi, Peruzzi, and others, who did not offend the religious susceptibilities of the authorities and people of England. It has been well said that, "the inherent difficulty of the Jewish position in England during this period was the difference of creed, which prevented their belonging to the nation unless they belonged to the National Church. To expect the Church to have contravened this fundamental principle would be to anticipate history by six centuries. To expect the Jews to renounce their creed, would be to neglect the experience of twenty centuries. The two positions were irreconcilable, and the Jews had to leave England when the law of the Church was extended to them."

An interesting entry in the Regesta of Pope Honorius IV., under date 1286, 14 Kal. Dec. (*i.e.*, November 18), may here be noted. It consists of mandates to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and their suffragans, directing them to oppose, by inhibitions and spiritual penalties, by sermons and other means, the book commonly called "Thalamud" (*i.e.*, the Talmud), which the Jews in England were putting forth as of greater authority than the law of Moses, to the injury of the faithful, and the apostacy of converts from Judaism.

The Great Expulsion took place in the year 1290, when all Jews were

commanded, before All Saints' Day following, to leave England, and never again to return. With the exception of certain movables, and such money as would defray the expenses of their journey, all their goods and coin were taken possession of by the King. The expelling of the Jews, agreeable enough to Edward I., was hastened by a handsome grant from the Commons and clergy. We ought rather to call the grant a bribe, for it was bestowed on condition that the Jews were immediately ordered out of the kingdom. What must the English Jews, in their long exile from our shores, have thought when Henry VIII. plundered the Church that had plundered them? The cry for the expulsion in 1290 was popular, as almost every Englishman owed money to the Jews. Over 16,000 of the doomed race left this country. Among the Miscellanea of the Exchequer (King's Remembrancer) we have writs to the sheriffs of various counties, commanding them to see to the production of all Jewish contracts and bonds, to discover and seize all houses held by Jews at the Expulsion, and to proclaim that all persons having goods or chattels of the Jews were to deliver them to the Treasurer and Barons of the Exchequer. A further Roll gives a list of the grantees of the houses thus seized.

More than three centuries and a half passed before the Jews could openly return to England. But we have traces of them in the interim. In the 14th century the Commons complained that many in this country professing to be Italians were in reality Jews; and it is in this same century that an incident occurred which is surely unique in English annals. On the Patent Roll for 13 Richard II. (part 2, m. 29), we have, under date November 14, 1389, a notification that Richard de Cicile, a Jewish convert, had lately received the sacrament of baptism, in the presence of the King, at his manor of Langeley (*i.e.*, King's Langley, co. Hertford), from the Bishop of London, and that the said Richard proposed to go to divers parts to trade *catholice* ("catholikment" in the original Privy Seal) with other Christians. "Cicile" is a frequent variation of Cecil in the old Records. Is it possible that the Cecils, like Disraeli, were of Jewish extraction? The Christian name given to this convert in baptism was doubtless in honour of the monarch. But the King took further notice of him. In the Issue Roll of the Exchequer for Michaelmas, 13 Richard II., under date December 14, 1389, the same incident is related, and we learn that the King had granted to the said Richard an annuity of £10 (£200 of our present money), to be received at the Exchequer, for his life, in aid of his support. Fifty marks were paid to the convert on that day, "as a reward, because that, as yet, the aforesaid Richard had received nothing of the

annuity aforesaid, and also to qualify him as a Catholic to traffic with certain Christians out of England." Again, among the disbursements of Henry VI., in 1429, were payments to some Jews of Abingdon for acting plays and interludes before the King at Christmas. Verily a "command" performance! In the 15th century, also, the Spanish ambassador complained to Henry VII. of the asylum offered in England to the Jews expelled from Spain. In the 16th century there were, among the notable Jews in England, Queen Elizabeth's physician, Rodrigo Lopez, and P. Ferdinandus, teacher of Hebrew at Cambridge.

Passing, however, to the days of Oliver Cromwell, we see among the State Papers of the Interregnum many documents of great interest concerning the return of the Jews to England. One writer says, with much reason: "The motives of the Dutch supporters of Menasseh ben Israel were mainly commercial. The agitation against the monopoly of the companies of Eastern merchants in England, and the attempts of Cromwell to render the trade free, had stimulated a new activity on the part of English shippers, and in the middle of the 17th century the Dutch were feeling acutely the commercial competition of the English in the East Indies. None were more deeply interested in that branch of trade than the Jews of Amsterdam, and hence it became desirable for them to be able to establish correspondents and agencies in England without hindrances or risk." This testimony has doubtless good grounds, but the commercial motives would not have obtained success had it not been for Cromwell's spirit of toleration, and the general Puritan bias in favour of God's ancient people. In the collection of Sir Julian Goldsmid, there is an exceedingly rare tract, being the petition of two Amsterdam Jews to Lord Fairfax and the General Council of Officers for the repeal of the Act banishing the Jews from England. The petition is dated January 5, 1648/9.

In the Public Record Office there are several documents in the Council of State Order Books to which attention must now be directed. First of all, on October 10, 1651, there is the appointment of a Committee to answer the letter of Menasseh ben Israel for leave to come to England. Not till November of the following year do we come upon the first pass, allowing him to cross from Holland to this country. There are similar passes in December, 1652, and in September, 1653. On October 31, 1655, the Council of State, hearing that Menasseh ben Israel was attending at their door with books which he wished to present to them, ordered the clerk, Mr. Jessop, to receive the books and to bring them in. In the following month (November 13, 1655) a petition was presented to Cromwell by

Menasseh ben Israel, praying that the Jews might be allowed to live in England, with liberty to exercise their religion and to trade. The petition is in French, and unsigned. It was referred to more than one Committee, but the report thereon was unfavourable.

Shortly after we have a memorable document,¹ in the form of a petition by Menasseh ben Israel and six other Jews of London, praying for a written license to meet in their houses for worship and to bury their dead outside the city. The date of the petition is March 24, 1655-6. Cromwell wrote at the foot of it, "Oliver P. We do refer this petition to the consideration of our Council." The Protector's pen has caught in the fold of the petition, and thus blotted the top part of the "O." What thoughts, we wonder, passed through Cromwell's brain as he wrote his name in so strangely tremulous a fashion, and added the reference to his Council? Did he fear they would not agree? No written license is extant, and it seems probable that the petition was rejected. But although the great Protector could not carry his Council with him, he had influence enough to give an *unofficial* authorization to the petitioners; for the Jews did come to reside in England, and in the Bevis Marks Synagogue is still preserved the lease, dated in February, 1657, of the Spanish and Portuguese burial-ground at Stepney. Among the State Papers of the Commonwealth at the Public Record Office we have, further, an Order in Council, dated February 19, 1657, advising Cromwell to grant Menasseh ben Israel a pension of £100 a year (at least £500 of our money). The pension, however, did not last long, for on September 17, 1657, Menasseh asked for £300 in discharge of it, as he wished to carry his son's corpse back to Holland. The Council allowed the petitioner £200 on the same day. Early in January, 1659, John Sadler petitions Richard Cromwell for the payment to Menasseh's widow of certain sums granted to her husband by Oliver Cromwell.

In 1660 we have among the State Papers of Charles II.'s reign, a remonstrance against the permission to the Jews to reside in England and proposing the imposition of heavy taxes on them, and the seizure of their personal property. The writer suggests that they offered to buy St. Paul's for a synagogue in Cromwell's time. This may have been a version of what is a fairly-grounded statement, viz., that the Jews offered the Protector £60,000 for a synagogue in London. Ferdinandus Mendez, a Jew, was Court physician to Catherine of Braganza, Queen of Charles II.: and a few years before, in 1655,

1. See Frontispiece.

Cromwell had granted a pass to "Abraham de Mercado, M.D., Hebrew, and David Raphael de Mercado, his son," to go to Barbadoes to exercise their profession.

It appears, from an investigation made into the matter, that the first *official* authorization for the Jews to reside in England belongs to the reign of the most unpopular and most bigoted of our Stuart Kings, James II. A correspondence in the Jewish press settles the year 1685 as the date of the event. It is singular that in that very year a crowd of Jews were arrested at the Royal Exchange for not attending Church! In 1702 an early Parliament of Queen Anne passed an Act, by which a Jew was bound to make an allowance for his children who had embraced Christianity, however much he wished to disinherit them. This Act was not repealed until 1846. In the reign of Queen Anne, also, the Jews offered Godolphin half a million of money if the Government would allow them to purchase the town of Brentford, so that they might settle there, and possess full privileges of trade. The bribe was refused, for fear of provoking the clergy and the merchants.

The return under Cromwell had not brought the liberties and rights that the Jews expected. They were not allowed, as my old colleague, Mr. A. C. Ewald, points out, "to hold lands, to compete in the various professions, to deal with the higher branches of trade, to fulfil the commonest duties of citizens—they were pariahs treated as pariahs, and almost the sole occupation permitted them was the grasping practice of usury. . . . The Jew might hold crowns in pawn, but to possess the pettiest freehold was beyond him. His wealth might cause armies to march and fleets to sail, but a commission in 'the services' was closed to him."

In 1723 Jews re-acquired a right to possess land in England. In 1753 a Bill was brought in by Henry Pelham to naturalise the German Jews, who had come over in large numbers into England, on the accession of the House of Hanover. The Bill actually became law, but had to be repealed in the following year, owing to the opposition of many English cities. By this intolerance the progress of Jewish emancipation was seriously retarded, and it was not until 1830 that the question was again brought before the public.

The 19th century has many years memorable in the history of English Jews. In 1806 the Jews' Hospital in London was founded. In 1808 was established the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews. On May 2, 1819, the first sermon delivered in English at an English Synagogue was preached by Rabbi Tobias Goodman, in the Jews' Synagogue, Seel Street, Liverpool. Not until 1828 was even a



EXTERIOR OF MUSEUM OF THE PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE.
(On the exact site of the Old Rolls Chapel.)

converted Jew admitted to the freedom of the City. In 1830, Mr. Robert Grant introduced a Bill for the repeal of the Civil Disabilities of the Jews. This was defeated on the second reading. In 1832, by the first Reform Bill, Jews, who had the necessary qualifications, got a right to vote, a privilege hitherto denied them, and were raised to municipal offices, but not till Lord Lyndhurst's Act of 1845 were they enabled to perform the duties of such offices, by being relieved from taking oaths. In 1833 the first Jew was called to the Bar. In 1835 Mr. David Salomons was the first Jew to be elected a Sheriff of London. In 1837 Moses Montefiore was elected to the same honour, and received knighthood from the hands of the young Queen Victoria, being the first of his race to obtain that distinction. In 1841 Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid was the first Jew to be made a baronet.

In 1849 began the memorable battle for admission to Parliament, fought over the bodies of Baron Lionel de Rothschild and Alderman Salomons. The former was returned by a large majority in that year as member for the City. A similar distinction was accorded him in the years 1852 and 1857. Alderman Salomons was elected member for Greenwich in 1851, and in 1855 became the first Jewish Lord Mayor of London. But neither of these distinguished men could take his seat in the House until the year 1858, when, by the good offices of Mr. Disraeli, a compromise was arranged with the Lords, by which the whole of the Jewish claim was conceded. In 1860 an Act was passed permitting Jewish members of Parliament to omit from the oath the words, "on the faith of a Christian." The year 1868 will always be notable as that in which Benjamin Disraeli, Jewish in extraction though not in faith, became Prime Minister. In 1870 Jews were permitted by statute to work on Sundays. In 1871, after the abolition of the tests, a Jew obtained the degree of M.A. In 1885 Lord Rothschild took his seat in the House of Lords, being the first Jewish member of that assembly. Sir George Jessel, before he became a judge, was Solicitor-General in a Liberal ministry, and Baron Henry de Worms was Under-Secretary in the Board of Trade in a Conservative ministry, whilst three members of the present Cabinet are distinguished Jews.

What ages have passed before Jewish emancipation has been achieved, even in this land of liberty! But the emancipation that awaits Israel as a nation shall surpass all their imaginings. God gave the Holy Land to His chosen people "for an everlasting possession" (Gen. 17, 6), and He has never revoked the deed of gift. The Jews must receive it again one day. If they are without a land now, their land is also without a people, for

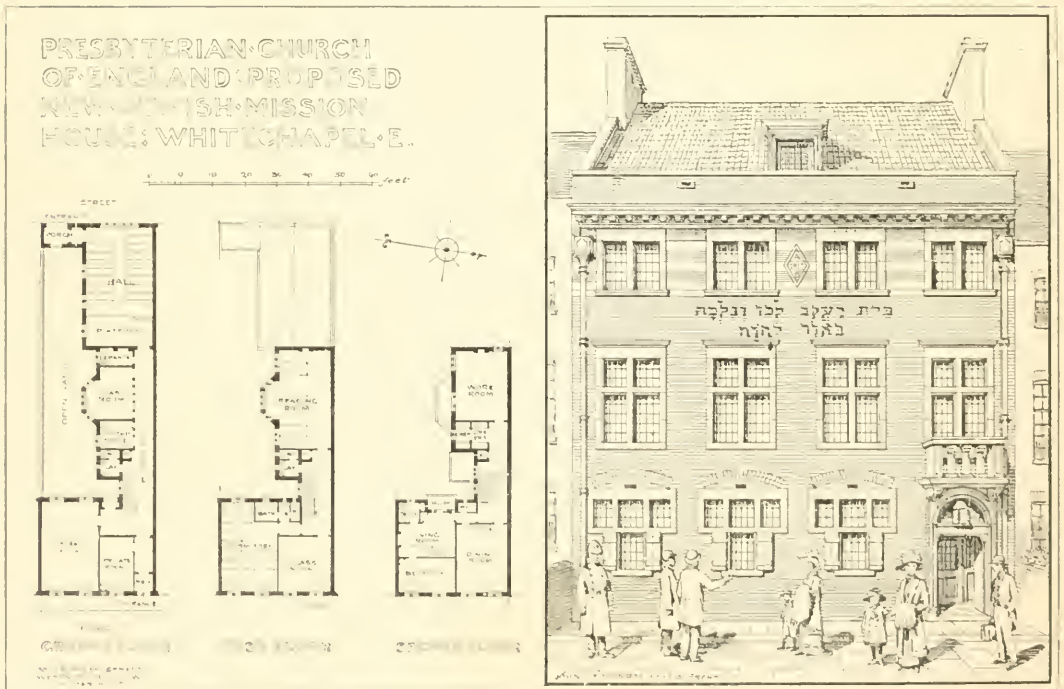
Turk and Arab might depart to-morrow, without leaving scarce a trace behind, except the desolation they have wrought. The Jew rose to grandeur under the only eternal form of Government, the theocracy. Even throughout the days of the Kings of Israel or Judah, we see its shining thread in the sacred record, when we read of prince or subject, "He did that which was good *in the eyes of the Lord*"; "He did that which was evil *in the eyes of the Lord*." Proud man sneered at the theocracy. He boasted of governments made by himself. Yet empires have risen and fallen, kingdoms have waxed and waned, republics have come and gone. But the theocracy has continued meantime invisibly its Divine course. The theocracy shall rise again. It must rise again. How the Jew must sigh for its return. It must be re-established in more than its pristine splendour over Israel. For Jew and Gentile shall yet form one kingdom of God and of His Christ. All other kingdoms shall have gone for ever, and God shall be all in all.

What has been our treatment of the Jews in things spiritual? Why have Christian missions to the heathen so often languished? Because the Church has been faithless, and has presumed to invert the order of missions ordained by her King and Head. "Beginning at Jerusalem," was His command. "To the Jew first," said the great Apostle of the Gentiles. All the Apostles of Jesus began with the Jew, and never were missions like theirs. It may be said that our Foreign Missions have been abundantly owned of God. The answer is: True, but how much blessing has been lost to them by neglecting the Jew? How much more fruitful would those missions have been had we followed our Lord's order. *His* reasoning was: "Mine own people have crucified Me, therefore they have most need of my salvation; go to them first." The Church has reasoned: "These Jews have crucified the Christ of God, therefore they deserve to be killed"; and oppressed, robbed, tortured, and killed they have been. "Dieu le volt," was the Norman-French cry of crusading times. "A bas les Juifs," rang out through many a generation. "God wills it," was the proclamation from Christian pulpits throughout several centuries. The broad, bloody stain can be seen by the most careless reader of history's pages. And the stain is not ended yet. It is appalling to think that the oppression and butchery has been done in the name of Christ; and never has there been such a foul outrage on the Adorable Name in all human annals, except it be the appropriation of the name of Jesus by the greatest but most unscrupulous Order in the Church of Rome. Can we wonder that, until recent times, the Jews heartily blasphemed the Christ, whose professed followers perpetrated such enormities? Israel has been oppressed, but has outlived her oppressors.



OLD PREMISES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN JEWISH MISSION, WHITECHAPEL, E.

(Inset: The Rev. Mark Polan.)



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND. PROPOSED NEW JEWISH MISSION HOUSE, WHITECHAPEL, E.

And so she always will. In that respect she is like the Church of Christ, "persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." And the ultimate triumph of both is assured, for they stand or fall together, and we know that "the gates of hell shall not prevail" against the one or the other. The purposes of the Eternal God must be fulfilled. The Jew can no more do without Christianity than Christianity can do without the Jew. Shall we

"Whose lips are wet with waters sweet
That flowed from Jewish rills,"

be slack in giving God's chosen nation the sweeter waters of that river into which those rills opened out, and from which we ourselves have, by the Divine mercy, been privileged to drink for our own salvation? God has brought about in divers nations the granting of liberties to the Jews, and the obtaining of such rights has softened many Jewish prejudices and hatreds.

"With faces darkened in the battle flame,
With banners faded from their early pride,
Through wind, and sun, and showers of bleaching rain,
Yet red in all their garment, doubly dyed,
With many a wound upon them, many a stain,
They came with steps that faltered, yet they came!"

God has richly blessed all efforts to make known to Israel His salvation. It is recorded that when the safety lamp for miners was first taken down a pit where it had never been known before, the miners, who had worked by such a poor, dim light as a small revolving steel gave by the sparks struck off from a flint, were amazed. As soon as they saw a man coming along the workings of the mine with what seemed to be a naked flame in his hands, they shouted at him with curses, and bid him go, for he was bringing certain death and destruction to the pit. But when the man advanced, in the confidence which that wonderful invention, the safety lamp, gives, sure of his own kind intentions; and when he drew near the deluded miners, and showed them that what they thought was danger was really safety, and that what they deemed to be death was meant to be their preservation from death, their anger was turned to amazement, and their bitter curses into admiration and thankfulness. Such is the change in the Jewish mind when the Gospel of Christ is received.

What has the Presbyterian Church of England done for Jewish Missions? About forty years of devoted work by a few earnest souls, under severe disadvantages and limitations. Not a single building can we call our own. A poor Mission House, with lease expired, in Whitechapel, a hall temporarily held in Notting

Hill, and hired premises in Aleppo ; these constitute our scene of operations. Is it not time that we put ourselves more into line with the will and purposes of the Lord Jesus Christ ? Never was there such willingness as now among the Jews to listen to His Gospel. They welcome, indeed, in various lands the arguments that prove Him to be their long-looked-for Messiah. The hearts of the children are being turned to the fathers—the fathers who, like Abraham, saw Christ's "day afar off, and were glad." Nothing is more pathetic in the history of the race than their unquenchable belief that Jehovah will in His own good time deliver them. Two Rabbis, approaching Jerusalem, observed a fox running upon the hill Zion, and Rabbi Joshua wept, but Rabbi Eliezer laughed. "Wherefore dost thou laugh ?" said he who wept. "Nay, wherefore dost thou weep ?" demanded Rabbi Eliezer. "I weep," replied Rabbi Joshua, "because I see what is written in the Lamentations fulfilled ; "because of the Mount Zion which is desolate, the foxes walk upon it." "And, therefore," said Rabbi Eliezer, "do I laugh : for when I see with my own eyes that God has fulfilled His threatenings to the very letter, I have thereby a pledge that not one of his *promises* shall fail, for He is ever more ready to show mercy than judgment." When the Jews are converted, they will become the grandest missionaries of the Cross. Their business tact and energy, their wealth, their indomitable perseverance and amazing power of endurance, their vast knowledge of the sciences and languages, and especially of the Hebrew Scriptures, and their irrepressible disposition to travel, will all be consecrated to the service of their Messiah. Well might the Apostle Paul exclaim, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead" (Rom. II. 15.)

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